

Message Text

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MBFR NEGOTIATIONS

FROM US REP MBFR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR NEGOTIATIONS: DISCUSSION WITH SOVIET REPS

MARCH 13, 1974

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF DISCUSSION WITH SOVIET REPS

AS DISTRIBUTED BY US REP AT AD HOC GROUP MEETING

MARCH 15.

BEGIN TEXT:

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: AT SOVIET INVITATION, US REP AND
DEPREP MET WITH SOVIET REPS KHLESTOV AND SMIRNOVSKY
ON THE EVENING OF MARCH 13. IT WAS A LARGELY SOCIAL

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OCCASION. MRS. KHLESTOV WAS PRESENT AT THE OUTSET,

BUT FADED AWAY LATER.

2. SOVIET REPS INDICATED THEY THOUGHT INFORMAL SESSIONS WERE USEFUL AND SHOULD BE CONTINUED. KHESTOV AND SMIRNOVSKY PUSHED THEIR MODIFIED SYMBOLIC REDUCTION PROPOSAL. US REP EXPLAINED WESTERN OBJECTIONS TO THAT PROPOSAL, THAT IT WAS BASED ON ACCEPTANCE OF PRESENT FORCE RELATIONSHIP AND THAT OTHER WESTERN DIRECT PARTICIPANTS WERE IN FROM THE OUTSET. US REP TOLD SOVIET REPS THAT THE ONLY ROUTE TO EUROPEAN REDUCTIONS HE COULD SEE WAS VIA PHASE I AND US AND SOVIET REDUCTIONS. SOVIET REPS SAID WEST'S REDUCTION PROPOSALS WERE INEQUITABLE. US REP REPEATED HIS POSITION ON SOVIET SYMBOLIC PROPOSAL. IT BECAME OBVIOUS THERE WAS LITTLE MORE TO BE SAID, AND THE EVENING BROKE UP EARLY, END SUMMARY.

3. KHESTOV BEGAN BY ASKING US REP FOR HIS ASSESSMENT OF THE USEFULNESS OF THE INFORMAL SESSION.

4. US REP REPLIED THAT HE CONSIDERED THESE SESSIONS A USEFUL VEHICLE FOR A SYSTEMATIC EXCHANGE OF OPINIONS. THEY HAD NOT YET BROUGHT SUBSTANTIVE PROGRESS BUT THEY WERE PRODUCING INFORMATION ABOUT THE VIEWS OF EACH SIDE WHICH WAS NECESSARY FOUNDATION FOR PROGRESS. KHESTOV SAID HE AGREED WITH THIS ASSESSMENT; INFORMAL SESSIONS WOULD CONTINUE. KHESTOV SAID SOVIET REPS HAD PUT A GOOD DEAL OF EFFORT INTO DEVELOPING THEIR PRESENT PROPOSAL FOR SYMBOLIC REDUCTIONS, AND HE THOUGHT THE CONCEPT HAD SOME POSSIBILITIES.

5. US REP SAID HE THOUGHT MOST RECENT SOVIET PROPOSAL HAD SOME POSITIVE ASPECTS. THE IDEA OF A GLOBAL CEILING COMBINED WITH THE IDEA OF LIMITATION ON ENTRY OF FORCES FROM THE OUTSET HAD SOME POSITIVE ASPECTS. DESPITE RELUCTANCE OF SOVIET REPS TO ADMIT THIS, HE ALSO CONSIDERED THAT, SINCE SOVIETS CLEARLY WERE ENVISAGING A SEPARATE SIGNATURE AND IMPLEMENTATION PLUS CONTINUATION OF NEGOTIATIONS, THEIR PROPOSAL WAS IN FACT CONCEIVED IN TERMS OF SEPARATE STAGES OF
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NEGOTIATION. HOWEVER, HE WISHED TO MAKE QUITE CLEAR THAT THE US HAD TWO FUNDAMENTAL OBJECTIONS TO THE SOVIET SYMBOLIC PROPOSAL: IT UTILIZED THE PRESENT RELATIONSHIP OF FORCES AS THE BASIS OF REDUCTIONS, THUS SANCTIONING THE CONTINUATION OF THAT RELATIONSHIP, AND IT PROVIDED THAT ALL PARTICIPANTS WOULD REDUCE FROM THE OUTSET. US REPS WERE CLEARLY AWARE OF SOVIET INTEREST IN EUROPEAN REDUCTIONS. BUT HE HAD

TO TELL SOVIET REPS THAT THE ONLY PRACTICAL WAY TO EUROPEAN REDUCTIONS HE COULD SEE WAS THROUGH PRIOR US-SOVIET REDUCTIONS. ALLIES HAD ALREADY TOLD EAST ENOUGH ABOUT PHASE II TO INDICATE THAT THEY WERE ACTING IN GOOD FAITH AND THAT THEIR NEGOTIATING APPROACH WAS A PRACTICAL ONE. IF THE EAST REALLY WANTED RESULTS BY 1975, STARTING WITH US-SOVIET REDUCTIONS WAS THE ONLY WAY TO MEET THIS GOAL.

6. SOVIET REP SAID US REPS WERE FULLY AWARE OF SOVIET OBJECTIONS TO THE SUBSTANCE OF THE ALLIED REDUCTION PROPOSALS. THESE PROPOSALS WERE INEQUITABLE AS TO THE EASTERN AND WESTERN REDUCTIONS PROPOSED AND THEY EXCLUDED AIR AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS. FURTHERMORE, THEY POSTPONED EUROPEAN REDUCTIONS TO SOME NEVER-NEVER LAND. SOVIET REPS HAD TRIED TO FIND SOME MIDDLE WAY BETWEEN THEIR STARTING PROPOSAL AND THE ALLIED APPROACH. THEY HAD DEVELOPED A NEW POSITION WHICH MET WESTERN INTERESTS ON THREE POINTS: IT DROPPED NATIONAL SUB-CEILINGS AND IT COULD SPECIFY THAT IT WOULD NOT BE A PRECEDENT FOR FURTHER REDUCTIONS: AND IT LEFT IT TO EACH SIDE TO DETERMINE HOW MANY FORCES SHOULD BE REDUCED FROM EACH NATIONAL FORCE, ALTHOUGH ALL SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN REDUCTIONS.

7. US REP SAID HE FELT THAT SOVIET REPS HAD DEMONSTRATED A DESIRE TO FIND AN OUTCOME. HOWEVER, THEIR PROPOSED SOLUTION WAS AN INADEQUATE ONE. REGARDLESS OF WHATEVER MIGHT BE SAID ABOUT IT IN THE TEXT OF ANY AGREEMENT, THE BASIS FOR REDUCTIONS WOULD BE THAT ORIGINALLY PROPOSED BY THE EAST, THE PRESENT RELATIONSHIP OF FORCES. MOREOVER, IT WOULD INVOLVE THE WESTERN EUROPEANS IN REDUCTIONS FROM THE OUTSET. HE
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HAD JUST STATED THAT THE WAY TO WESTERN EUROPEAN REDUCTIONS WAS VIA US-SOVIET REDUCTIONS.

8. SOVIET REPS CLAIMED ALLIES HAD NOT MADE GOOD ON ORIGINAL WESTERN OFFER TO PRODUCE ASSURANCES OF CLARIFICATIONS REGARDING WESTERN EUROPEAN PARTICIPATION IN PHASE II OF THE ALLIED APPROACH WHICH THEY HAD MADE AT THE OUTSET OF THE PRESENT INFORMAL SESSIONS. ALLIES HAD IN FACT NOT UNDERTAKEN ANY COMMITMENT EXCEPT TO START PHASE II NEGOTIATIONS AT SOME FIXED PERIOD OF TIME.

9. US REP POINTED OUT THAT SOVIETS HAD NEVER ACCEPTED THE PROCEDURAL APPROACH ORIGINALLY PROPOSED BY ALLIED REPS BUT HAD INSISTED THAT A DIFFERENT APPROACH BE USED AS THE BASIS FOR THE INFORMAL SESSIONS. HENCE,

THEY COULD SCARCELY FAULT ALLIED REPS FOR NOT FULFILLING
THEIR PART OF THE BARGAIN. US
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